

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 18, 2006

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush:

We're writing to express our strong support for the request by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for a major disaster declaration. It is urgent for Massachusetts to obtain this declaration as soon as possible, so that the victims of the current flooding and their communities may receive the assistance they need and deserve.

The rain is finally receding after the worst flooding in Massachusetts in 70 years. The rising flood waters have caused thousands of residents to evacuate their homes and flee for safety. The cities and towns of Methuen, Melrose, Peabody, Lowell, Lawrence, Haverhill, Middleton, Andover, Boxford, Topsfield, and Saugus were among the hardest-hit communities.

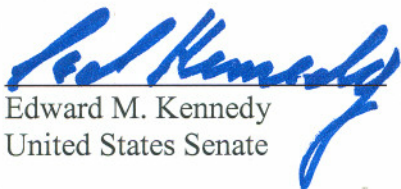
Governor Romney has asked that Essex, Middlesex and Suffolk counties be made eligible for Individual Assistance under the disaster declaration, and that all counties be eligible for Hazard Mitigation assistance. A Public Assistance request for the affected counties is also forthcoming.

Individual Assistance enables private citizens to obtain temporary housing assistance, unemployment assistance, crisis counseling and other essential needs in the flood-damaged area. Hazard Mitigation helps affected communities make long-term flood-proofing improvements, and Public Assistance reimburses municipalities for community needs such as emergency response personnel, debris removal, and repairs to flood-damaged schools, roads and bridges, hospitals, and municipal buildings.

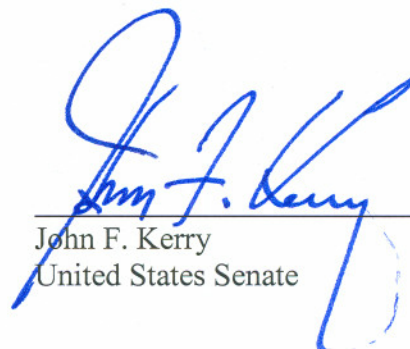
It is clear that the massive flooding has put the area in dire need of immediate assistance. We hope that you will expedite the disaster declaration, so that the state can conduct the recovery with the assurance of federal aid.

With respect and appreciation, and we thank you for considering our request.

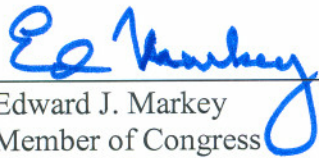
Sincerely,



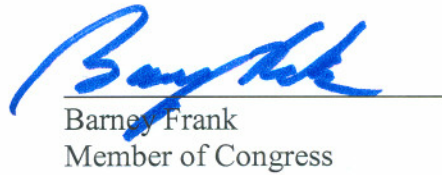
Edward M. Kennedy
United States Senate



John F. Kerry
United States Senate



Edward J. Markey
Member of Congress



Barney Frank
Member of Congress



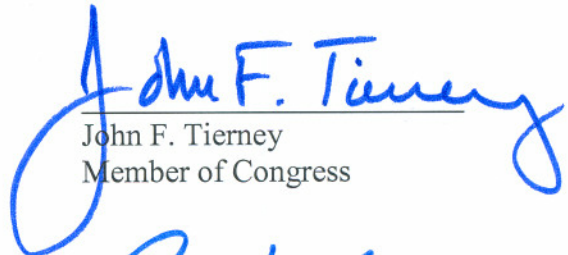
Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress



John W. Olver
Member of Congress



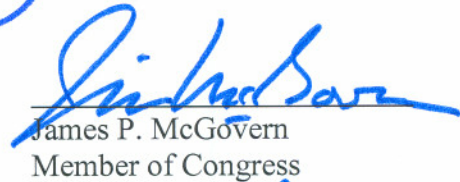
Martin Meehan
Member of Congress



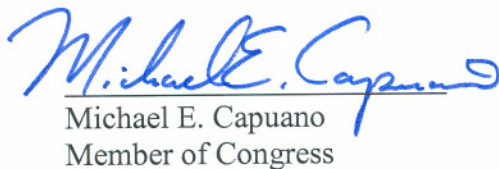
John F. Tierney
Member of Congress



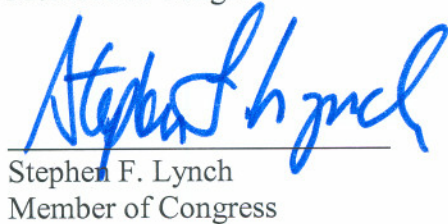
William Delahunt
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress